

Questions and Answers
RFQ No. SCA77015Q0002
Telephone Answering Services
U.S. Consulate General Vancouver

1. Whether companies from Outside Canada can apply for this?

Yes, companies from outside of Canada may apply for this solicitation, provided they are technically acceptable, fiscally responsible, and submit competitive and acceptable quotations. Companies must be legally authorized to operate in Canada, and comply with local law.

2. Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

In-person meetings are not required at the US Consulate General Vancouver, allowing for companies outside the local area to compete for the contract and provide services.

3. Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside Canada?

Yes, as will be stated in the Request for Quotation (RFQ), services will not be performed on site at the USCG Vancouver offices. Services are expected to be performed at the vendor's offices or locations.

4. Can we submit our proposals via email?

Yes, proposals may be submitted via email. Hard copies of quotations are accepted, but not mandatory.

5. List of Items, Schedule of Requirements, Scope of Work, Terms of Reference, Bill of Materials required.

These items will be specified in the RFQ, posted to the US Embassy Ottawa's webpage (<http://canada.usembassy.gov/about-us/procurement.html>)

6. Soft Copy of the Tender Document through email.

See Question 5.

7. Names of countries that will be eligible to participate in this tender.

Companies who submit quotations will not be limited, excluded, or disqualified based on country of origin or place of business. However, the Federal Acquisitions Regulation (FAR, www.acquisition.gov/far/) does prohibit the U.S. Government from working with companies who violate contract clauses or remain on the Exclusion Parties List under the System for Awards Management (<https://www.sam.gov/>). Please refer to those materials to ensure your company is eligible.

8. Information about the Tendering Procedure and Guidelines

See Question 5.

9. Estimated Budget for this Purchase

For full and open competition, budgets and independent government estimates are not made public during the solicitation process. Bids will be first considered on a technically-acceptable basis. Among those bids deemed technically acceptable, the award will be made to the lowest bidder. Base your quotation bid on what services are required and your cost and profit to provide such services.

10. Any Extension of Bidding Deadline?

No extensions will be given beyond the deadline listed in the RFQ.

11. Any Addendum or Pre Bid meeting Minutes?

All addendums, pre-bid meeting minutes, question and answers, modifications, and other pertinent documents will be posted under the US Embassy Ottawa's webpage for public viewing. This ensures all eligible vendors will have access to the same information, creating a fair and open bidding process.

12. How do you plan to use the service?

See RFQ page 10, Performance Work Statement.

13. What type of call volume do you forecast on a daily or weekly basis?

Based on our FY2015 invoices, normal monthly activity forecasts roughly 1500 minutes of calls with 100-200 patch minutes.

14. Is this an ongoing application or special project for a specific period of time?

This is an ongoing application for a base period of one year with the Government's option to renew each year for an additional four years.

15. Will each employee have their own phone line forwarded and require their calls to answered and personalised to them, or will just one main number for the Consulate be answered and then the calls/messages are directed to individual employee requested or as per call flow process/scripting?

One main number for the Consulate is to be answered with calls/messages directed to the individual employee requested as per scripting.

16. Are you able to provide estimates of the anticipated or historical call volumes on either a daily, weekly, monthly or year basis?

See Question 13

17. Is registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) necessary?

According to the US Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 4.1102(a)(5), mandatory registration for all federal vendors; exception for foreign vendors providing work overseas, if impractical

Canada qualifies as overseas and with the timeline for SAM registration and the bidding process, this would also be impractical.

18. What is the average call length?

Our best estimate is 4.62 minutes. This is based on the patch minutes in May 2015 (97 min) and the amount of messages passed on to the Consulate (21). We currently do not have that same information for each month over the last 12 months, but it gives a good baseline for creating an RFQ.

19. Form 1449 – 17a. asks for CODE and FACILITY CODE, please explain what is required here. Form 1449 asks us to complete Blocks 23 and 24. I assume we are also required to complete and submit all pricing tables (2.2 – 2.7.) Can you clarify this. Or can we reference these tables in our response to Blocks 23 and 24?

SF-1449, 17a: Code and Facility Code are not required and may be left blank

SF-1449, 23/24: Complete pricing tables from 2.2-2.7 are sufficient for this section, and therefore may be left blank

20. Section 2.0 D) it states - The Government will make payment in local currency. Does this mean pricing is to be in US funds or Canadian funds?

The Consulate operates in Vancouver, BC; therefore local currency refers to Canadian dollars.

21. Would pricing fixed price per agent or for the entire headcount?

The number of employees at the US Consulate General in Vancouver, British Columbia does fluctuate on an irregular, unpredictable basis. This firm-fixed price contract is for the office as a whole, not based on the number of phone lines or employees. A rough estimate of call volume is described in Question 13.

22. How would the telecom be set up? From originating phone number to terminating phone number or using IP address to IP address peering? And who will cover the telecom cost?

Standby while consulting with our local IT staff.

23. For overseas vendors, is it necessary to comply with Section 5, Paragraphs B-P?

Companies registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) website are required to complete paragraph B in Section 5. Companies that have not completed annual representations and certification via SAM must complete paragraphs C-P.